



Nbt ʿnh in Ancient Egyptian Religion

Mona Ezz Ali

*Associate Professor, Tourist Guidance Department- Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-
University of El Mansoura, Egypt*

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with goddess *nbt ʿnh*. It clarified her roles in Ancient Egyptian religion by studying the textual and iconographical sources for this goddess from different periods, starting from the Middle Kingdom to the end of the Graeco-Roman period. It explained the meaning of her name, as her name consisted of two parts; the first part is *nbt* which means mistress or lady, and the second part is *ʿnh* which means life. Her name was translated as the mistress of life. She was called mistress of provisions, who helps gods, the serpent guide of the sunshine on the roads, who strengthens the ropes on the steering oars on the western ways, she represented the 9th hour of the day, and she represented the 5th hour of the night, and in some coffins she represented the 4th hour of the night. The research also clarifies the deities who carried the title of *nbt ʿnh*. This research applies the descriptive and analytical methodology. The study reached specific important results, including the forms of the goddess's name. It also exposed the different forms in which this deity appeared as she appeared in the human form; once with the sun disc on her head and once with the star on her head or her hands, referring to her relation to the day and night hours. The research also exposed her famous titles and her roles and functions in Ancient Egyptian religion. It clarifies her relation to Isis and Re, and it also shows the deities who carried the title of *nbt ʿnh* like (*mwt, srkt, w3dt, hwt hr, ist, rn nwtt, mshnt, b3stt, nhbt, and t3 snt nfrt tfnt*).

KEYWORDS

nbt ʿnh, 9th hour of the day, 4th and 5th hour of the night.

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نبت عنخ فى الديانة المصرية القديمة

منى عز على

قسم الارشاد السياحى- كلية السياحة والفنادق- جامعة المنصورة- مصر

الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث دراسة عن الإله نبت عنخ وكذلك لقب سيدة الحياة الذى حملته العديد من المعبودات. ويوضح البحث أدوار المعبودة نبت عنخ فى الديانة المصرية القديمة من خلال دراسة المصادر النصية والتصويرية لهذه الإلهة من فترات مختلفة، بدءاً من عصر الدولة الوسطى وحتى نهاية العصرين اليوناني والروماني. ويشرح البحث معنى اسمها، الذى يتكون من جزأين (الجزء الأول نبت ويعني السيدة، والجزء الثاني عنخ ويعني الحياة). ويترجم اسمها إلى سيدة الحياة. وقد أطلق عليها سيدة المؤن، التي تساعد الآلهة، ومرشدة أشعة الشمس على الطرق، والتي تُقوي الحبال على مجاديف التوجيه في العالم الغربي، وهي تمثل الساعة التاسعة من النهار، وتمثل الساعة الخامسة من الليل، وفي بعض التوابيت تمثل الساعة الرابعة من الليل. ويطبق هذا البحث المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى نتائج مهمة محددة، من بينها الأشكال المختلفة لاسم الإلهة. كما كشف البحث عن الأشكال المختلفة التي ظهرت بها هذه الإلهة، إذ ظهرت في صورة آدمية، فأحياناً تظهر بقرص الشمس على رأسها، وأحياناً أخرى بالنجمة على رأسها أو يديها، في إشارة إلى علاقتها بساعات الليل والنهار. وكشف البحث أيضاً عن ألقابها الشهيرة وأدوارها ووظائفها في الديانة المصرية القديمة. وأوضح أيضاً ارتباطها بالمعبودة ايزيس والاله رع ، ووضح ارتباط لقب النبت عنخ أو سيدة الحياة ببعض المعبودات مثل (موت، سرقت، واجت، حاتحور، إيزيس، رننوت، مسخت، باستت، نخبت ، تاسنت نفرت).

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الكلمات الدالة

نبت عنخ، الساعة التاسعة من النهار، الساعة الخامسة والرابعة من الليل.

Northern Wall of the Naos, Phila Temple²⁶



rdi sššt n mwt.f ist nbt ʿnh.

Giving sistrum to his mother, Isis, Nebet Ankh.

Eastern Wall of the Naos, Phila Temple²⁷



rdi wsh n mwt.f ist nbt ʿnh.

Giving Wesekh collar to his mother, Isis, Nebet Ankh.

Southern Wall of the Naos, Phila Temple²⁸



rdi irp n mwt.f ist nbt iw p3 rk nbt ʿnh.

Giving wine to his mother, Isis, lady of Philae, Nebet Ankh.

Western Face of Hall B, Kom Ombo Temple²⁹



dd mdw in t3 snt nftr tfnt nbt nbyt šspt wsrt hnwt nbt ʿnh.

Words spoken by Tasent nefert Tefnwt mistress of Kom Ombo the noble one, the powerful, Nebet Ankh.

2.1.3 The Goddess's Inscriptions in Tombs

Ceiling of Halle C, Tomb of Baken ren.f in Saqqara, 26th Dynasty³⁰



dd mdw wnwtpsd nt rʿ nbt ʿnh n rn .s ʿhʿ.s n

"Words spoken. the 9th hour of the day." Nebet Ankh ", is her name. She stands for (.....)".

²⁶ G. Bénédict, *Description et histoire de l'île de Philae. Textes hiéroglyphiques. Le temple de Philae*. 1er fasc, Paris, 1893, p. 47.

²⁷ G. Bénédict, *Le temple de Philae*, p. 59.

²⁸ G. Bénédict, *Le temple de Philae*, p. 39.

²⁹ J. De Morgan, *Catalogue des monuments et inscriptions de l'Égypte antique* III, Vienne, 1902, pl. 514.

³⁰ S. El Naggar, "Etude préliminaire d'un ciel voûté d'e' hypgée de Bakenrenf (L. 24) ā Saqqara", *Evo* ix, fig. 12.

Doc. 2


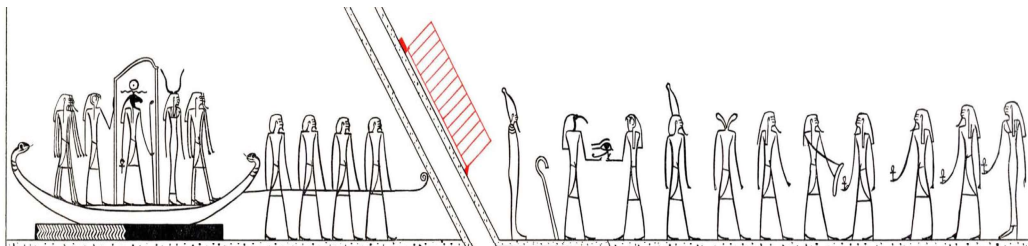
Nebet Ankh appeared in the upper register of the 1st hour of *imy dw3t*. She is the last one in the third row. She appeared as a standing goddess with hanging arms, and her name appears next to her ⁴² (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Nebet Ankh appeared as a standing goddess with hanging arms in the upper register of the 1st hour of *imy dw3t*. After D. Warburton, David Alain, *The Egyptian Amduat: the book of the hidden chamber*, Zurich, 2007, p. 16.

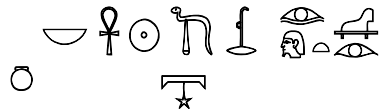
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In the middle register of the 4th hour of *imy dw3t*. She appears with other three gods holding the *nh* sign in their hands. She appears in a human form in a standing attitude with hanging arms. She holds *nh* sign in one hand. They go in their way to the sacred bark to protect the god and the navigators who pull the bark with their ropes⁴³ (Fig. 3).



⁴² *Amd* 117, Nr 12; D. Warburton, *The Egyptian Amduat: The book of the hidden chamber*, Zurich, 2007, p. 20.

⁴³ A. Piankoff, *The tomb of Ramesses VI*, New York, 1954, fig. 77.



nbt nh dd mdw ptr tpt wsir.

"Mistress of life. Words spoken Behold Osiris." (Fig. 5).

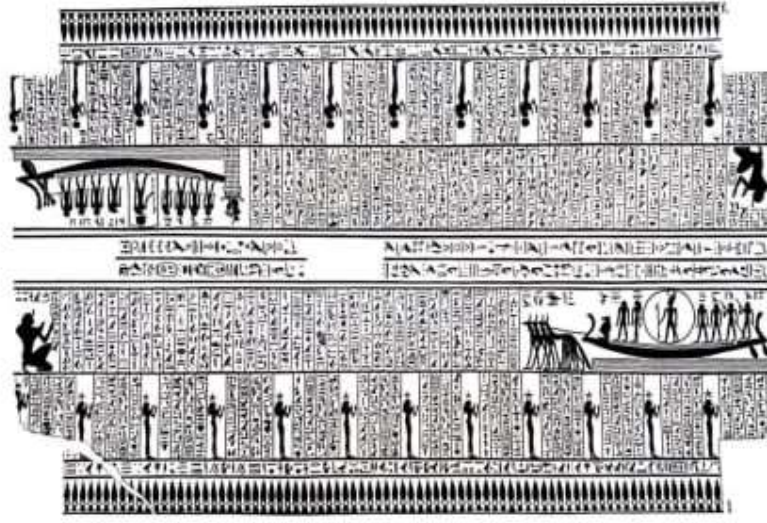


Fig. 5: Nebet Ankh appears on one side as the 9th hour of the day, and on the other side as the 5th hour of the night, the lid of the sarcophagus of King Aspelta. After D. Dunham, the royal Cemeteries of Kush, p. 87.

DOC. 6

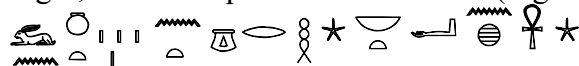
In lid of Sarcophagus Leiden AMM5, Anthropoid sarcophagus of Peftjauneith. Nebet Ankh appears as a woman sitting on one knee, carrying the sun disc on her head and on her hand among other 11 goddesses, designating the 12 hours of the day, and she represents here the 9th hour. The accompanying text reads:



dd mdw wnw nt r nbt nh

Words spoken. The 9th hour of the day." Nebet Ankh".

On the other side, *nbt nh* appears as a woman sitting on one knee, carrying a star on her head and on her hand among other 11 goddesses, designating the 12 hours of the night, and she represents here the 4th (Fig. 6).



wnw fdw nt grh nbt nh

The 4th hour of the night, Nebet Ankh.



Fig. 6: Nebet Ankh with a sun disc on her head, sarcophagus of Peftjauneith. After H.D. Schneider, *de Egyptische oudheid*, p. 128.

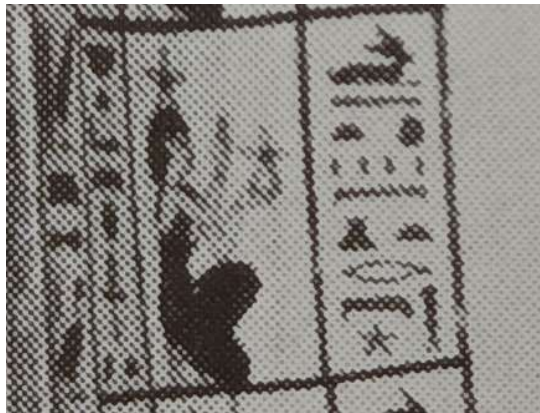


Fig. 7: Nebet Ankh as a lady with sun disc on her head and in her hand, sarcophagus of Peftjauneith. After H.D. Schneider, *de Egyptische oudheid*, p. 128.

Doc. 7

Nebet Ankh appears as a standing goddess with a star on her head. She stands among other deities in the last section of the book of days; she is preceded by two gods; one with a human head and the other with an ibis head⁴⁶ (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8: Nebet Ankh appears as a standing goddess with a star on her head. After A. Piankoff, *Livre du Jour et de la Nuit*, pl. iii.

Doc. 8

In the western half of pronaos in Dendera temple. Nebet Ankh appears as a goddess with a star on her head with hanging arms. Her name is inscribed before her and behind her there are five stars indicating that she is the goddess of the 5th hour of the night⁴⁷ (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9: Nebet Ankh appears as a goddess with a star on her head, western half of pronaos in Dendera temple. After O. Neugebauer and R. Parker, *Decans, planets, Constellations and Zodiacs*, pl. 41.

⁴⁶ A. Piankoff, *Livre du Jour et de la Nuit*, BdE 13, 1942, p. 30.

⁴⁷ O. Neugebauer and R. Parker, *Decans, planets, Constellations and Zodiacs*, London, 1964, pl. 41.

DOC. 9

In the lid of the ram sarcophagus CG 29792. Nebet Ankh is represented among 12 goddesses representing the 12 hours of the night. She appears as a woman with hanging arms and a star on her head, she represents the 5th hour of the night ⁴⁸ (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10: Nebet Ankh is represented among of 12 goddesses representing the 12 hours of the night, the lid of the ram sarcophagus CG 29792. After H. De Meulenaere and P. Mackay, *Mendes II*, pl. 38, Nr. 163.











⁴⁸ H.De Meulenaere and P. Mackay, *Mendes II*, Warminster, 1976, pl. 38, Nr. 163.

3. Results and Discussion





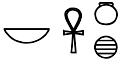










3.1 The Name of Nebet Ankh

From the studied texts and scenes, it is noticed that the name of Nebet Ankh was written in different ideograms as follows⁴⁹:

Table 1: The different writings of the name of Nebet Ankh




Name Form	Era	Location
	The Middle Kingdom	CT IV, 177, spell 332
	The Middle Kingdom	CT VII, 108, spell 901
	The New Kingdom	pBM ii 10309
 	The 26 th Dynasty	The lid of the sarcophagus of Anlamani and Aspelta (Boston MFA 23729)
	The 26 th Dynasty	Sarcophagus of <i>hr m3^c hrw</i>
	The 26 th Dynasty	Ceiling of hall C, tomb of Baken ren.f in Saqqara
	The 27 th Dynasty	Sarcophagus Brussel E 586
	The 27 th Dynasty	Healing statue 1065
	Graeco-Roman Period	Sarcophagus <i>hr m3^c hrw</i> G 57b





⁴⁹ Chr. leitz, *Lexicon der Ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnung* III, OLA 112, (Leuven- Paris, 2002), p. 199.




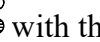
	Graeco-Roman Period	Dendera temple
	Graeco-Roman Period	Dendera temple
	Graeco-Roman Period	Dendera temple
	Graeco-Roman Period	Dendera temple
	Graeco-Roman period	Dendera temple
	Graeco-Roman period	Pylon of Philae
	Graeco-Roman period	Edfu temple
	Graeco-Roman period	Edfu temple
	Graeco-Roman period	Edfu temple
	Graeco-Roman period	Edfu temple
	Graeco-Roman period	Kom Ombo temple
	Graeco-Roman period	Stela CG 9402
	Graeco-Roman period	Sarcophagus of Panchemisis, Wien AS 4
	Graeco-Roman period	Sarcophagus of <i>nh hpi</i> CG 29301
	Graeco-Roman period	Sarcophagus of <i>dd hr</i> CG 29305





The name of Nebet Ankh consisted of two parts; the first part is *nbt* that means mistress or lady⁵⁰, and the second part is *nh* which means life⁵¹. Her name is translated as the mistress of life.

Her name appeared in the sacred texts by the Middle Kingdom in the coffin texts with

the phonetic complements  and , then her name appeared during the New Kingdom in the *imy dw3t* book and in pBM ii 10309 as .

During the late period her name was written in the same form, but in some cases it ended with the sun disc, as she represented the 9th hour of the day  (The lid of sarcophagus of Anlamani and Aspelta (Boston MFA 23729), or it appeared only with the two signs  and  and when she represented the 5th hour of the night her name was written  with the determinative of a woman in sarcophagus Brussel E 586).

During the Graeco-Roman period her name appeared with the usual form  or with other different forms like , ,  with the sign of *nw* instead of the sign

representing *n*, , and her name was written in Stela CG 9402 as  when she designated with serket, and she was written in Sarcophagus of Panehemisis wien AS 4 as  using the sign *h* instead of the sign *h*. Her name was written in the sarcophagus of *nh hpi* CG 29301 with the determinative of a star indicating that she is one of the goddesses of the night hours .

3.2 Titles

Nebet Ankh carried many titles as follows:

Table 2: The Titles

Title	Era	Location
"the fifth room. The room of the lady of life, mistress of provisions, who helps the gods	The Middle Kingdom	CT VII, 108, spell 901
the serpent guide of the sunshine on the roads. I'm who strengthens the ropes on the steering oars on the western ways.	The Middle Kingdom	CT IV, 177, spell 332
the 5 th gate	The 26 th Dynasty	The lid of the sarcophagus of Anlamani and Aspelta

⁵⁰ *Wb* II, p. 232.

⁵¹ *Wb* I, p. 193.

		(Boston MFA 23729)
The 9 th hour of the day	The 26 th Dynasty	Ceiling of hall C, tomb of Baken ren.f in Saqqara
The 5 th hour of the night	The 27 th Dynasty	Sarcophagus Brussel E 586
Nebet Ankh, the Lady of Protection.	Graeco-Roman period	A Magical Statue Base, Spell VIII.
The regent, the mother of the gods, the sovereign in the whole country, she is the mistress. ⁵²		

It is noticed from her titles that she represented the 5th hour of the night and the 9th hour of the day. She carried other titles referring to her benefits the Lady of Protection mistress of provisions, who helps the gods, the serpent guide of the sunshine on the roads. I'm who strengthens the ropes on the steering oars on the western ways. She carried other titles that indicate her greatness like the regent, the mother of the gods, the sovereign in the whole country, she is the mistress.

3.3 Functions and Roles of Nebet Ankh

From her titles, it is clear that she carried out many missions as follows:

- She was called mistress of provisions, who helps the gods.
- She was the serpent who guides the sunshine on the roads, who strengthens the ropes on the steering oars on the western ways.
- She represents the 9th hour of the day.
- She represents the 4th hour of the night, and in some coffins, she represents the 5th hour of the night.
- She represents the 5th gate and guards Osiris
- She rises or stands for Isis, as it was shown in part of her name of the 9th hour of the day. *dd mdw wnw t psd nt r^c nbt n^h n rn.s h^c.s n ist wrt mwt ntr*. "Words spoken. the 9th hour of the day, Nebet Ankh, is her name. She stands for Isis, the great mother of the god"⁵³.

3.4 Forms of Nebet Ankh

Nebet Ankh appeared in a human form in different attitudes:

- In Fig. 1 as a lady with two dangling arms and wearing a sun disc on her head
- In Fig. 2 Nebet Ankh appeared as a standing goddess with hanging arms in the upper register of the 1st hour of *imy dw3t*
- In Fig. 3 Nebet Ankh appeared with hanging arms with other three gods holding the *n^h* sign in their hands in the middle register of the 4th hour of *imy dw3t*.

⁵² S. Cauville, *Dendara X/2*, p. 93.

⁵³ E. Graefe, *The Ritual of the Hours of the Day*, p. 165, fig. 11.

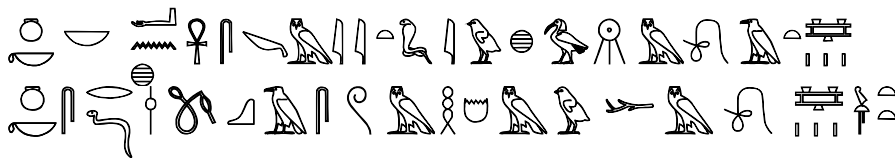
- In Fig. 4 Nebet Ankh appeared sitting on the bulging body of two headed cobra, covering her face with her hand in the upper register of the 11th hour of *imy dw3t*.
- In Fig. 5 Nebet Ankh appears on one side as a lady representing the 9th hour of the day with sun disc over her head, and on the other side as the 5th hour of the night with the star over her head in the lid of the sarcophagus of King Aspelta.
- In Fig. 6 Nebet Ankh appeared as a lady sitting on her knee, while holding a sun disc between her hands and another one over her head, representing the 9th hour of the day, while in the other side, she appears in the same attitude, but while holding a star between her hands, and another a star appeared over her head, representing the 4th hour of the night. In the lid of Anthropoid sarcophagus of Peftjauneith.
- In Figs. 7-10 Nebet Ankh appears among other deities as a standing goddess with a star on her head.

3.5 Her Relation to Other Deities

Isis: She is associated with Isis, as she rises or stands for Isis, as it was shown in part of her name of the 9th hour of the day. *ḏd mḏw wnwṯ psḏ nt rꜥ nbt ʿnh n rn .s ḥꜥ.s n išt wrt mwt nṯr*. "Words spoken. the 9th hour of the day. "lady of life", is her name. She stands for Isis, the great mother of the god".⁵⁴

Re: She is associated with Re, as she guides him on the roads, and strengthens the ropes on the steering oars on the western ways.⁵⁵

CT IV, 177, spell 332⁵⁶



ink nbt ʿnh sšmt 3ḥw m w3wt ink srwḏ k3s m ḥmw m w3wt imntt

I'm Nebet Ankh, the serpent guide of the sunshine on the roads. I'm who strengthens the ropes on the steering oars on the western ways.

3.6 Nebet Ankh as a Title Designated to Some Deities

It is clear from this study that *nbt ʿnh* was used as a title for many goddesses as in the following texts:

Goddess *mwt*: *mwt nbt ʿnh nwt wrt k3t m ḏdw* "Mwt, Nebet Ankh, Nwt the great of height in Abydos"⁵⁷.

Goddess *srkt*: *srkt nbt ʿnh* "Serket, Nebet Ankh"⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ E. Graefe, *the Ritual of the Hours of the Day*, p. 165, fig. 11.

⁵⁵ R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* ii, (Warminster, 1977), p. 46.

⁵⁶ R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* ii, (Warminster, 1977), p. 46.

⁵⁷ W. Fli. Petrie, *Abydos I*, London, 1902, pl. 73.

Goddess w3dt: *dd mḏw in w3dt nbt P ḥnwt dp irt rḥ nbt ḥnh* "Words spoken by wadjit, mistress of Pe(Buto), lady of Dep, eye of Re, Nebet Ankh"⁵⁹.

Goddess ḥwt ḥr: *dd mḏw in ḥwt ḥr nbt iwnt irt rḥ ḥry ib bḥdt nbt pt ḥnwt ntrw nb wsrt nbt ḥnh* " words spoken by Hathor, lady of Dendera, eye of Re, who is worshipped in Edfu, lady of sky, mistress of all gods, the powerful, Nebet Ankh"⁶⁰
ḥwt ḥr nbt ḥtpt nbt ḥnh ḥnt i3t dit
"Hathor, lady of offering, Nebet Ankh in Dendera"⁶¹.

Goddess ist: *dd mḏw in ist wrt mwt nbt i3t di ḥry ib iwnt nbt ḥnh di n.s wd3t* "Words spoken by Isis, the great mother, the mistress of Iat di, who is in the midst of Dendera, Nebet Ankh, giving her wd3t eyes"⁶².

dd mḏw in ist nbt i3t wḥbit nbt i3t rk nbt ḥnh
"Words spoken by Isis, lady of mound of Abaton, lady of Philae Nebet Ankh"⁶³.

dd mḏw in ist wrt nbt i3t di ḥry (t) ib iwn.t ḥnwt t3wy ḥk3t nbt ḥnh
"Words spoken by Isis the great one the mistress of Iat di (the place of birth) in the midst of Dendera, lady of two lands, the ruler, Nebet Ankh"⁶⁴.

Goddess rnnwtt: *dd mḏw in rnnwtt nfrt iḥrt nbt ḥnh ḥnt ntr(w). di.i n.k ḥntš r snfr ib.k*
"Words to be spoken by Renenoutet the beautiful, the uraeus Nebet Ankh, among the gods"⁶⁵.

Goddess mshnt: *dd mḏw in mshnt mnḥt ḥntyt t3 rr 3tyt nfrt nbt mrwt nbt ḥnh ḥnt i3t di di.i w3rh fnd.k hr t3w n ḥnh*
"Words spoken by Meskhenet, the excellent, who presides over Tarer, the mistress nurse of love, Nebet Ankh in Iatdi. I make your nose dilated with the breath of life"⁶⁶.

Goddess b3stt: *dd mḏw in b3stt nbt b3st ḥntyt pr b3stt šmḥ nbt ḥnh ḥryt ib iwnt nbt ḥḥwt ḥryt ib b3st*
"Words spoken by Bastet, mistress of Bubastes, who presides over the southern sanctuary of Bastet (Dendera), Nebet Ankh who is in Dendera, mistress of joy who is in Bubastis".⁶⁷

Goddess nhbt: *nhbt nbt nhb nbt ḥnh* "Nekhet, lady of Nekheb, Nebet Ankh"⁶⁸.
dd mḏw nbt ḥwt wrt nbt ḥnh nbt nsr

⁵⁸ E.A.W. Budge, *The Mummy*, London, 1974, pl. 33; L. Kakosy, *Egyptian Healing Statues in Three Museums in Italy (Turino, Florence, Naples)*, Torino, 1999, p. 149, pl. 44.

⁵⁹ É. Chassinat, *Le Temple de Dendara II*, Le Caire, 1943, p. 226.

⁶⁰ É. Chassinat, *Le Temple de Edfu v*, le Caire, 1928, p. 77.

⁶¹ É. Chassinat, *Le Temple de Dendara III*, Le Caire, 1953, p. 34.

⁶² É. Chassinat, *Le Temple de Dendara III*, Le Caire, 1953, p. 191.

⁶³ H. Junker, *Der Grosse Pylon des Tempels der Isis*, p. 84.

⁶⁴ É. Chassinat, *Le Temple Dendara ix*, Le Caire, 1987 p. 183.

⁶⁵ S. Cauville, *Le Temple de Dendara X/2*, p. 49.

⁶⁶ S. Cauville, *Le Temple de Dendara X/2*, p. 50.

⁶⁷ G. Soukiasian, " Une version des veillées horaires d'Osiris", *BIFAO* 82, 1982, p. 338

⁶⁸ É. Chassinat, *Le Temple de Edfu v*, p. 321.





















"Words spoken by Nephtys, the great, Nebet Ankh, mistress of flame"⁶⁹.

Goddess *t3 snt nfrt tfnt*: *dd mdw in t3 snt nfrt tfnt nbt nbyt šspt wsrt hnwt nbt nḥ*

"Words spoken by Tasent Nefert Tefnwt mistress of Kom Ombo the noble one, the powerful, Nebet Ankh"⁷⁰.

Conclusion

From this study it is concluded that the name of Nebet Ankh has been depicted in

different ideograms ( ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  ,  , ,

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